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Afghan Children Read



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Learning to Read in Herat

QUARTER 4 AND ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year 2016

Quarterly Report July – September 2016

Annual Report April – September 2016

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Executive Summary

The *Afghan Children Read* project (April 6, 2016 through April 5, 2021) is a USAID-funded primary education initiative designed to improve equitable access to education in Afghanistan. The envisioned outcome of the project is to build the capacity of the Ministry of Education (MoE) to provide an evidence-based early grade reading (EGR) program (in Dari and Pashto) in both formal and Community-Based Education (CBE) schools for students in grades 1 to 3.

This is the second report of the *Afghan Children Read* project. It covers both the quarterly and annual report for the periods of Q4 of FY 2016 between July 1, 2016 and September 30, 2016, and YR1 (FY 2016) between April 6, 2016 and September 30, 2016.

Despite the challenges caused by working in a high-risk security environment and the lack of availability of EGR Survey Project results, the project has made considerable progress in collaboration with the MoE. The MoE has taken on a leadership role in the project. MoE senior leaders and staff are well-versed in the *Afghan Children Read* project. The MoE has agreed upon and has been fully engaged in the Rapid Production Model for the development of the EGR material for grades 1 to 3.

In an effort to build the MoE's capacity to sustain and scale the project, the Early Grade Reading Steering Group (SG) and Technical Work Groups have been formed. Also, a core development team of writers, illustrators, graphic designers and editors have been established. This team, with support from internationally recognized experts, developed a scope and sequence in both Dari and Pashto for grades 1 to 3. EGR materials for the Student Book and Teachers' Guide in Dari and Pashto have been drafted and are ready for field testing.

In terms of establishing the needed pillars for a smooth project implementation, the majority of the Creative staff and consortium partner staff have been recruited. The necessary protocols have been met in establishing all security measures for the *Afghan Children Read* office and residence for the Project's international employees. As a result, the Project will continue to provide a safe venue for meetings, and workshops.

Afghan Children Read will continue to provide feedback loops for beneficiaries and stakeholders and translate lessons learned into effective approaches for implementation in the ensuing years of project implementation.

Acronyms

AHG	Afghan Holding Group
ARTF	Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund
CBE	Community Based Education
COP	Chief of Party
Creative	Creative Associates International
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
EA	Equal Access
ECCN	Education in Crisis & Conflict Network
EGR	Early Grade Reading
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EQUIP	Education Quality Improvement Program
GA	Gender Analysis
GIRoA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
GIZ	German Corporation for International Cooperation
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
HQ	Headquarters
HICD	Human Institutional Capacity Development
HR	Human Resources
ICA	Institutional Capacity Assessment
IRC	International Rescue Committee
IR	Intermediate Results
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoE	Ministry of Education
NTA	National Technical Assistance Salary Scale
OCDP	Organizational Capacity Development Plan
Q	Quarter
QR	Quarterly Report
RERA	Rapid Education Risk Analysis
RPM	Rapid Production Model
SB	Student Book
SG	Steering Group
SMES	School Management Effectiveness and Safety Survey
SOW	Scope of Work
STTA	Short Term Technical Assistance
TED	Teacher Education Directorate
TG	Teacher Guide
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
YR	Year

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Program Description and Goal

Overview of the Program

Afghan Children Read is a USAID-funded primary education initiative designed to improve equitable access to education and generate measureable reading outcomes for girls and boys in Afghanistan. *Afghan Children Read* will support education service delivery, through building the capacity of the Ministry of Education (MoE) to provide an evidence-based early grade reading (EGR) program (in Dari and Pashto) for students in grades 1 to 3 in both formal and Community-Based Education (CBE) schools. Strengthened skills, systems, models and materials will also enable future development of additional local mother-tongue languages into the national reading curriculum.

This project will build upon the foundation laid through the *Resources, Skills and Capacities in Early Grade Reading Project* (EGR Survey Project) also funded by USAID. The *EGR Survey* project is conducting preliminary assessments, research and surveying of the current climate for a national reading program, to conclude with results that will shape the focus and design of *Afghan Children Read*. *Afghan Children Read* will also complement and leverage other key USG and donor education-related investments in Afghanistan, including the CBE activity implemented by UNICEF, in-service and pre-service teacher training funded by GIZ, the coming EQUIP III program to be funded through the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF), and other donor investments.

The *Afghan Children Read* project period extends from April 6, 2016 through April 5, 2021. This project is contracted under an Advancing Basic Education: Access for All Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity task order. The task order results are intended to contribute to achieving USAID's strategic educational goals to:

1. Meet targets under Goals 1 and 3 of the USAID Education Strategy, 2011 - achieving direct outcomes in reading, while complementing existing investments in CBE and non-formal education.
2. Minimize the development of parallel systems in the education sector by providing technical assistance and partnerships with key MoE counterparts and working through host country systems to the extent possible, resulting in a national program that the GIRoA MoE can scale up both financially and technically through the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF).
3. Strengthen the policies, systems, and resources that are available to the MoE, particularly in the area of EGR.
4. Foster positive gender norms, including a highlighted attention to female students and teachers, who are the least likely to have access to schooling in Afghanistan.

The Project is implemented by the consortium consisting of Creative Associates International, Inc. (Creative), the International Rescue Committee (IRC), Afghan Holding Group (AHG), and two niche partners SIL-LEAD and Equal Access (EA). Creative is responsible for the overall management of the team in meeting the expectations of the *Afghan Children Read* contract.

Program Results Framework Overview

The *Afghan Children Read* consortium is working closely and in concert to ensure the project results are met. While there are two distinct IRs (see Table I below): IR1. *Increase MoE capacity to implement an evidence-based EGR program* and IR2. *Pilot an evidence-based EGR program that improves reading results*, they are also mutually dependent. IR1 builds foundational capacity of the MoE for scaling the EGR intervention, but this scale-up cannot be actualized without the knowledge gained from IR2, for which the pilot serves as a learning laboratory.

Table I:

RESULT 1	The Ministry of Education, from the national, provincial, district, and school levels, is able to implement an evidence-based Early Grade Reading curriculum and instruction program that benefits students in both formal and CBE classes
IR 1.1	Capacity of MoE, at national, provincial, and district levels built to develop, plan/budget for, manage, implement, and monitor an early grade reading curriculum and instruction program
IR 1.2	Policies, standards, and benchmarks that support improved early grade reading instruction in public and community based education classrooms developed and adopted
IR 1.3	National and sub-national early grade reading (EGR) assessments, data collection and analysis systems established
RESULT 2	An evidence-based Early Grade Reading curriculum and instruction program piloted that improves early grade reading outcomes for first through third grade public and CBE students
IR 2.1	Evidence-based early grade reading curriculum and instruction program developed
IR 2.2	Evidence-based early grade reading instructional materials in use in public and CBE classrooms
IR 2.3	Evidence-based early grade reading curriculum and instruction program implemented at the school level in public and CBE schools
IR 2.4	Procedures and systems for supervision, coaching, and monitoring of teachers and students implemented
IR 2.5	Partnerships with parents, school shuras, communities, the private sector, and nontraditional actors to increase equitable access to a quality education increased

The focus throughout the second Quarter (YR1 - Q4) has been on achieving MoE's commitment to the project methodology and approaches, while moving forward with the initial steps towards project implementation.

Summary for the Quarter 4 and YR I

Successes Achieved

- MoE senior leaders and staff at relevant MoE departments are well-informed and oriented about *Afghan Children Read* through the kick-off Technical Meeting conducted in June 2016.
- MoE's Early Grade Reading Steering Group (SG) and Technical Work Groups are formed, meeting regularly and following-up on the project's progress.
- Design of the Rapid Education Risk Analysis (RERA) and Gender Analysis (GA) assessments is finalized.
- The Project's cluster assessment and language mapping tools and methodology are under development and near to finalization.
- Pilot districts and target number of schools, teachers and students have been identified and will be verified through a cluster survey in the next quarter.
- Rapid Production Model process and timeframe for the development of EGR material for grades 1 to 3 was negotiated with and agreed upon by MoE.
- Establishment and capacity building of the MoE's EGR materials development core teams included writers, illustrators, graphic designers and editors.
- Development and leveling of the scope and sequence in both Dari and Pashto for grades 1 to 3 is completed.
- EGR G1 and G2 materials both the Student Book and Teacher Guide in Dari and Pashto are drafted and ready for field testing.
- Early Grade Reading and Writing Competences for Grade 1 and 2 are under development.
- Two Early Literacy course syllabuses are drafted as part of the pre-service primary diploma supported by GIZ and to be implemented by TED.

Major Challenges

- Lack of availability of EGR Survey¹ Project's EGRA results impacted *Afghan Children Read*'s timetable for establishing benchmarks for grades 1-3.
- No provincial disaggregation from the national EGR survey forthcoming due to its sample size.
- MoE request to delay the RERA and Gender Assessment until year one planning and startup was completed.
- MoE's material development team's challenges in understanding the EGR method, the lesson activities needed to support various EGR skills (e.g. phonics and syllabication), and writing good stories that meet the EGR instructional criteria.
- The limited number of MoE textbook illustrators participating in material development.

Associated Actions

- *Afghan Children Read* team will continue to draw on relevant international experience in EGR, while reaching out to and meeting with EGR Survey Project leadership on major assessment results and findings.

¹ Implemented by Chemonics

- The Project will be implementing its own EGRA in the pilot provinces in order to set target baselines and subsequently use the national EGR survey data to support benchmarking.
- At the time of this writing, the Project has requested USAID approval for extending the deadline for the RERA and GA assessments through to the end of the first Quarter (Q) of Year (YR) 2.
- The project's technical approach for ensuring quality of the EGR material involved adding several layers of revision and quality assurance. In particular, we extended the review process that will follow the material drafting workshop. This process will involve the lead MoE officials from curriculum and teacher education departments, and will request the MoE to form an independent Editorial Board for the final review of the material.
- *Afghan Children Read* is engaging illustrators from outside MoE to supplement the work of the MoE illustrators.

Project Implementation Annual Progress

General Project Start-up

This second report of the Afghan Children Read project is both a quarterly and an annual report. It covers QR4 of FY2016 between July 1, 2016 and September 30, 2016, and YRI (FY 2016) between April 6, 2016 and September 30, 2016. The starting date for *Afghan Children Read* is April 6, 2016. Given the project requirements to report against the fiscal year, our second project quarterly report is noted as YRI Q4 of the 2016 Fiscal Year and aligned with our project work plan.

Project Staffing

Progress achieved YRI

By the end of this reporting period, Creative has obtained USAID approval for *Afghan Children Read's* Senior Education Advisor who is expected to arrive in Kabul by the end of November 2016. The DCOP joined the Project in early September 2016. All other key personnel were already fielded during Q3. During this reporting period, Creative and its partners have continued the effort of hiring local staff for the Project. The majority of *Afghan Children Read's* local staff were recruited and on-boarded by the end of this reporting period

Challenges

The National Technical Assistance Salary Scale (NTA) continues to be a challenge in attracting highly-qualified candidates particularly for senior local positions. These positions are critical to effectively supporting the capacity strengthening needs of the MoE.

Another challenge experienced by the Project was in securing a Senior Education Advisor. Four excellent candidates ended up deciding not to join the project when security events flared up in the country. While the Project was hoping to bring on a woman for this position, so that not all the senior positions would be filled by men, this proved to be difficult.

Actions to be taken

Since the NTA policy is binding and non-negotiable, Creative and its partners have re-advertised positions several times in order to find capable and committed personnel. As candidates are in a position to seek employment from closing projects, we are hoping that the NTA will become less of an issue since all personnel will fall under the NTA policy. However, there is always the possibility that people who have worked for USG projects for years may opt to leave the country instead.

A highly qualified male candidate was selected for the position and will arrive in Kabul at the beginning of December.

Office Setup

Progress achieved this YR I

The establishment of the *Afghan Children Read's* office including security upgrade and IT networking have been completed during this reporting period for both the project office and residence for project's international employees. The office building is accommodating all the project meetings, events and workshops. The office's location and appropriate facilities have allowed ACR to easily host around 60 participants for the material development workshops during this reporting period. The site has been well appreciated by the MoE and frequently visited by both the Deputy Minister for General Education and the Director of Curriculum.

IRC's provincial offices in Herat and Nangarhar will be hosting all *Afghan Children Read* field staff from Creative and partner organizations. This will ensure effective coordination by all consortium members in those provinces.

As project staff will begin travelling to the provinces to support and follow-up on activities and implementation, *Afghan Children Read's* operations team, with support from Creative's Headquarter(HQ) operations team, have started the initial procedures for procuring soft-skin vehicles that will be needed for local staff travel.

Challenges

Afghan Children Read was fortunate to receive a considerable number of items for its office set-up. There were some items (furniture, equipment and one generator) which required disposal. Early in the YR I, Q4, IT items procured by Creative HQ were sent with one of Creative's US staff to provide short-term technical assistance (STTA) for the project. These items were detained at

Kabul Airport's Customs Office where they remain as of this writing. The delay in receiving the items will continue to slow down the finalization of the project's IT systems.

Actions to be taken

The damaged and/or surplus items received by USAID were disposed of as per USAID regulations in the early part of this reporting period.

Afghan Children Read's operations are working with USAID and relevant Afghan authorities to release the detained items. In the future, Creative will avoid sending any needed materials for the project through personnel who are traveling.

Intermediate Result Specific Reporting

For each Intermediary Result (IR) and sub-Intermediary Result, key Q4 activities and successes, challenges, and actions to be taken are identified. At the end of each Intermediary Result section, an annual Year One summary is provided including Lessons Learned. A detailed chart of Program Results, Tasks and Sub-activities and their status pertaining to Year One is attached in Annex I.

IR I	The Ministry of Education, from the national, provincial, district, and school levels, is able to implement an evidence-based Early Grade Reading curriculum and instruction program that benefits students in both formal and CBE classes
IR I.1	Capacity of MoE, at national, provincial, and district levels built to develop, plan/budget for, manage, implement, and monitor an early grade reading curriculum and instruction program

Progress achieved in Q4

- The MoE's Early Grade Reading Steering Group (SG) was formed by MoE and led by the Deputy Minister of Education for General Education with membership of MoE's General Directors of Policy and Planning, Academic Supervision, Teacher Education, Curriculum Development and Text Books, Basic Education and Social Mobilization, USAID and the Project. The SG membership also includes representatives from other relevant MoE departments and representatives of donor agencies as well as relevant external Afghan entities.



First SG Meeting – July 2016

- The first two SG meetings, held on July 21, 2016 and August 31, 2016 (minutes and details attached in Annexes 5 and 6 respectively) were geared towards emphasizing the *Afghan Children Read* work plan development and approach with the senior leadership of the MoE and ensuring the Ministry's ownership of the Project.
- Five MoE EGR Technical Work Groups (TWGs) were formed under the umbrella of the SG (Annex 7). The TWGs are engaged in the development, management, implementation and monitoring the project's EGR curriculum and instruction program. The five groups met on 19 July 2016 during which the Project provided a further orientation about *Afghan Children Read's* work plan and approaches while capitalizing on the discussions and results of the Kick-Off Technical workshop held in June 2016.



Technical Work Groups gathering– July 2016

- Three of the five TWG's have been particularly active and engaged with *Afghan Children Read* for the planning and implementation of the material development already underway (see IR 2.1) and the research efforts getting started (see IR 1.2). They are the following TWG's: Curriculum and Material Development, Professional Development, and Policy and Planning.
- The Scope of Work (SOW) for the Organizational Capacity Development Plan (OCDP) STTA was developed and the international capacity development expert was identified and is expected to arrive in Kabul in early October 2016.

Challenges

- The delay in obtaining the findings of the Institutional Capacity Assessment conducted under the EGR Survey Project created a challenge for the design of the OCDP.
- Two of the five TWG's; Systems and Management, and Social Mobilization are not yet fully engaged and have not begun to meet regularly.

Actions to be taken

- The SOW for the OCDP STTA includes conducting a mini-capacity assessment using a format developed by USAID called the Human Institutional Capacity Development (HICD). This assessment is both flexible and adaptive; it counts upon the full participation of the MoE so that the resulting analysis will provide an approach upon which all parties can agree.
- With the results of the HICD and as implementation moves into the provinces, the project is confident that all the five MoE's EGR TWGs will be fully engaged.

IR 1.2

Policies, standards, and benchmarks that support improved early grade reading instruction in public and community based education classrooms developed and adopted

Progress achieved in Q4

- The design of the start-up assessments, RERA and GA, were completed in consultation with the supportive Education Policies and Planning TWG.

Challenges

- The need for MoE commitment has been the main focus of *Afghan Children Read* during this quarter. We have worked diligently over the last several months to build a shared understanding of the Project through the SG and TWGs. Initially, the MoE was reluctant to discuss the RERA until we had completed the year one planning and orientation, and the TWGs were stood-up and active. We also needed to identify and agree upon the project's target districts. At the same time, we were waiting for insights from the EGR survey to inform our RERA design and we believe these will be forthcoming. All these factors contributed to a later than expected start with the RERA/GA assessment.

Actions to be taken

- We have laid the groundwork to begin discussing the RERA and GA research activities with MoE counterparts in detail.
- At the time of this writing, we have requested USAID's approval for an eight-week extension to submit both assessment reports by end of December 2016. We believe that the rescheduled implementation will provide us with the time to effectively engage with the MoE and to solicit their full cooperation as we move forward with these critical project documents.

IR 1.3

National and sub-national early grade reading (EGR) assessments, data collection and analysis systems established

Progress achieved in Q4

- Despite the absence of national EGRA results in Afghanistan, the current EGR material development efforts with MoE, led by *Afghan Children Read*'s reading and literacy experts, has capitalized on the international experiences of Creative and partners in a number of countries, particularly Pakistan, Nigeria, and Ethiopia. The Project's experts have drawn on lessons learned and successful practices from these countries.

Challenges

- The lack of data from the EGRA national survey results currently being conducted by the EGR Survey project didn't support the project's goal to enhance the MoE's understanding of

the current status of learning at early grades in Afghanistan and discussing concerns and opportunities.

Actions to be taken

- *Afghan Children Read's* team will continue to draw on their relevant international experience in EGR.
- The project team will continue to reach out to and meet with EGR Survey leadership and use all possible opportunities to learn about initial findings of the assessments.
- The project team will participate in the expected EGRA workshops implemented by EGR Survey project during Q1 and Q2 of FY2017.

IR I Overview Summary for Year I

The progress in IR I for this first fiscal year has been positive. The project staff have worked diligently to move the work forward with the MoE while under all the constraints of project start-up particularly working with a skeleton staff. When USAID/Afghanistan's Director of Education (in an August 2016 meeting) acknowledged the *Afghan Children Read's* strong start-up of activities under its responsibility, it was a tremendous boost to morale. In an implementing environment where delays are often commonplace, the *Afghan Children Read* has made every effort to ensure it is able to compensate for the lack of information emerging from the very important EGR Survey project through the provision of STTA support from Creative's HQ and from Project partners. USAID's support has also provided the Project with room to negotiate effective timelines with the MoE, particularly around the RERA and GA. It was significant for *Afghan Children Read's* credibility and to secure the commitment of the MoE, that the Project listened to the MoE's concerns and stepped back from pushing these assessments forward on a time-table which was not the Ministry's.

Some lessons learned in YR I are the following:

- Enter into transparent programming and planning at all levels of the MoE which allows for maximum MoE engagement at various levels and a demonstrated readiness to dedicate staff time and effort.
- Create an environment of collegiality which allows for flexibility and elasticity of activity implementation within reason.
- Build trust based on open and honest communication which allows for effective compromise when differences of opinion or approach occur.
- Find and rely upon champions/leaders in the MoE to ensure commitment to project goals and implementation.

Below is a review of overall IR I achievements in YR I:

Successes achieved in YR I

- MoE senior leaders and staff at different relevant departments are well-oriented about ACR through the kick off technical meeting that was conducted in June 2016.

- The MoE's Early Grade Reading Steering Group (SG) and Technical Work Groups have been formed.
- The MoE EGR Steering Group is meeting regularly and following up on the project's progress.
- The design of the RERA and GA assessments is finalized.

Challenges in YRI

- Lack of availability of EGR Survey Project's EGRA results impacted *Afghan Children Read's* timetable for establishing benchmarks for grades 1-3.
- Anticipated EGR Survey Project data will not provide disaggregation of results down to the provincial level.
- Request by MoE to delay the RERA until year one planning and startup was completed.

Associated Actions

- The project team will continue to draw on their relevant international experience in EGR and will continue to reach out to and meet with EGR Survey project leadership.
- The Project will establish its own baselines by implementing an EGRA in each of the pilot provinces and use the EGR Survey Project's results to both validate the *Afghan Children Read's* results and support benchmarking.
- The Project has applied for a USAID approval to extend the deadline for the RERA and GA assessments.

IR 2	An evidence-based Early Grade Reading curriculum and instruction program piloted that improves early grade reading outcomes for first through third grade public and CBE students
IR 2.1	Evidence-based early grade reading curriculum and instruction program developed

Progress achieved in Q4

- *Afghan Children Read* is working with a team of MoE materials developers from the Curriculum and Materials Development and Teacher Education TWGs and other staff from the same two MoE departments. This materials development team was selected by General Directors of Curriculum Development and Teacher Education based on agreed upon criteria with *Afghan Children Read's* technical experts. This team is composed of Dari and Pashto writers and linguists, trainers, illustrators, typists and designers (attached list in Annex 8). The material development team will continue engagement with the project for the development of the comprehensive EGR package inclusive of all necessary materials for leveled, decodable and illustrated Student Books, scripted Teacher Guide and teacher training and coaching manuals.
- The Rapid Production Model (RPM) being applied with MoE is to ensure the application of an evidence-based early grade reading curriculum and instruction program in classrooms in March 2017. The time table for implementation is outlined in Table #1.

ACR's Rapid Production Model: Graph #1

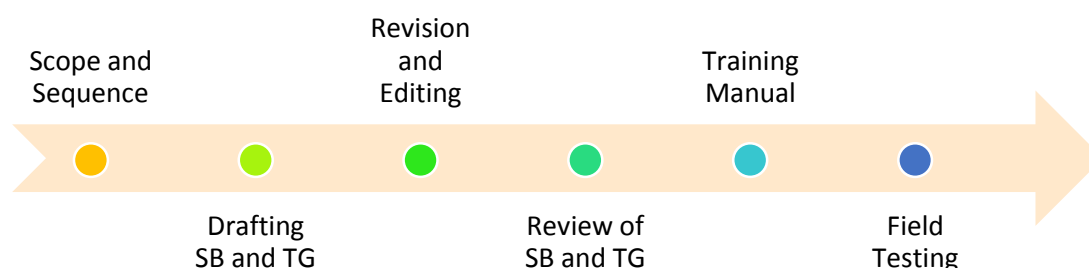


Table #1: Backwards planning timeline for the start of implementation in schools in March 2017

FINAL Product in schools	March 2017
Teacher training	February 2017
ToT training	January 2017
Master Training	December 2016
Printing Materials	December 2016
Editing/proofing	Second two weeks of November 2016
Validation and Material trial in Provinces	First two weeks of November 2016
Training manual development	October 2016
Writing of student books and teacher guides	17 August through 6 th October 2016
Kick-off workshop with curriculum department	14, 15, 16 August 2016

- The Project completed the analysis of Dari and Pashto texts using the SynPhony software (see textbox) to determine letter and word frequency for Scope and Sequence development.
- The Scope and Sequence Workshop, facilitated by *Afghan Children Read's* Literacy and Reading experts, was held from 14 to 17 August with the material development team (See Annex 8 for workshop objective and Agenda). The workshop resulted in developing the Scope and Sequence for the Dari and Pashto Grades 1, 2, and 3 reading curriculum. By the end of the workshop, participants developed understanding of the major elements of the technical areas in EGR material development. This understanding, expanded upon below, constitutes the basis for

A software program called **SynPhony** helps teachers create new materials and evaluate existing materials so that resources will effectively support the students' learning.

SynPhony makes the acquisition of literacy skills easier by finding and displaying the patterns used for written language. But instead of exposing students to the full range of symbols used to represent their language, SynPhony introduces one symbol at a time and finds the words that match their reading ability.

participant capacity building that will eventually become the MoE's institutional capacity for the development of literacy material:

- Participants demonstrated understanding of the major principles of teaching reading and writing, and the best practices in reading instruction in early grades. They developed understanding of the reading and writing skills and the instructional activities associated with the; phonemic awareness, alphabetic principles, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, concept of print and writing.
- Project reading experts introduced the team to the core competencies for teaching EGR and discussed the extent to which teachers in elementary school in Afghanistan manage those competences (Annex 8, Handout 1).



Technical Workshop on Materials Development – August 2016

- The team developed an understanding of the **frequency of occurrence** of the symbols in Dari and Pashto (Annex 8, Handouts 2). Participants were able to identify the following for each of Dari and Pashto languages that would shape the reading learning experience for the young learners: reading the frequency list of symbols; identifying the symbols that represents more than one sound; identifying sounds that have more than one symbol/letter; writing down the different shapes/forms of the letters, if applicable; understanding of syllable patterns in both languages; and writing down the basic punctuation marks/writing conventions for grades 1 to 3.
- Project reading experts worked with the team on further analysis of the number of lessons children need in order to learn to decode the symbols of the language. The time needed for children to get 'print ready, and planning lessons over years 1, 2 and 3. This work resulted in the **scope and sequence development** (form in handout 3 Annex 8) in both languages. Both Dari and Pashtu groups were able to reach an order to the letters to be used in the scope and sequence for grades 1-3.
- The team developed **activities and themes** for the scope and sequence from G1-3 in both Dari and Pashto.
- Following the Scope and Sequence workshop, ACR's literacy experts led a 6-week workshop (5 days a week) with the material development team for drafting the Student Book (SB) and the Teacher Guide (TG) for grades 1 and 2 in both Dari and Pashto. The Workshop will be completed in the first week of YR 2, Q1 (October 2016) and will be followed by the revision and editing task (see the PRM process in Graph #1) of the drafted SBs and TGs.

- The drafting workshop provided an opportunity for the material development team (including graphic designers and illustrators) to practice several curriculum development capacities. Participants, received training pertaining to gender, healing classrooms, peace building and inclusiveness. They have shown a growing understanding of how an evidence based approach for teaching reading and writing can be developed, including:
 - Developing a refined weekly schedule for EGR instruction.
 - Applying 5+2² in lessons (see Annex 11).
 - Developing a refined teaching order for the letters in both Dari and Pashto.
 - Developing themes and sub-themes.
 - Incorporating gender considerations and IRC Healing Classroom approach into themes and sub-themes development.
 - Writing narrative and expository listening texts appropriate for grade 1 and 2 children, including the requisite criteria: words with the letter in focus, 3-5 new vocabulary, gender sensitive, and aspects of peace building and healthy relationships.
 - Writing decodable stories and levelled narrative and expository text appropriate for grade 1 and 2 children, including the following criteria.
 - Using words with the letter in focus at different places of the words.
 - Repeating words from previous stories to help early grade readers create word visuals thus enhancing reading fluency.
 - Including gender sensitive, peace building and healthy relationship focused vocabulary.
 - Understanding the purpose of an illustration in a listening and reading text (showing not telling).
 - Writing an effective illustration description.
 - Writing interesting titles to the texts.
 - Writing a variety of comprehension questions: text based, inferential and word based.
 - Developing a teacher's guide with a page-by-page link to the content of the student book.
 - Writing activities for phonological awareness.
 - Selecting the words for blending and segmenting from the reading texts.
 - Writing a teacher's guide that contains listening (including comprehension questions), teaching letters, word blending and segmenting, and reading texts (including fluency and comprehension).
 - Collaborating on decisions related to lay-out and other book requirements - font size, line spacing, word spacing, size of book, and specifications for illustrations.

^{2 2} (phonemic awareness, alphabetic principles, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension) + concept of print, and writing



Illustrators at work on Grades 1 and 2 EGR materials.



Example of an illustration developed for the G1 and G2 student book.

- During the drafting process, the team was also involved in refining and producing the following instructional guiding documents:
 - Criteria for Reading texts for G1 to 3 (Annex 8 product 1);
 - Dari teaching order for G1 to 3 (Annex 8 product 2);
 - Pashto teaching order for G1 to 3 (Annex 8 product 3);
 - Weekly schedule for Reading and Writing in Mother Tongue (Annex 8 product 4);
 - and
 - Early Grade Reading and Writing Competences for Grade 1 and 2 (Annex 8 product 5).
- MoE senior leadership, during the workshop, showed interest in engaging and supporting the process through regular follow-up visits and meetings for discussing the various stages of the material development.



Deputy Minister of General Education meets with the MoE experts assigned to write EGR materials.

- During this quarter *Afghan Children Read* collaborated with GIZ pre-service teacher education program in Afghanistan and with the MoE's Teacher Education department (TED) on the development of the pre-service Primary Diploma to be provided by Teacher Training Colleges (TTC). Project experts have drafted syllabuses (Annex 9) of two Early Literacy courses (6 credit hours). Upon TED's approval of the structure of the primary diploma, the Project will continue the collaboration with GIZ and will work with a team of TTC trainers for the write up of the content of the Early Literacy courses.

Challenges

- Given that the EGR instructional approach is new to the formal education system in Afghanistan, it has been an intense effort for the MoE's material development team to integrate the 5+2 method with their current understanding of teaching reading and writing, and to grasp all the activities needed for the different EGR components throughout grade 1-3.
- Writing good stories that are also engaging, while taking into consideration all the required criteria, e.g. age appropriate, linking to the theme, length of stories, student level appropriate words is not a skill which is developed quickly. This takes time and practice, and, to some degree, talent for writing.
- The limited number of capable MoE illustrators has challenged the speed by which illustrations must be developed in order to meet the deadline for material completion.

Actions to be taken

- *Afghan Children Read's* approach for ensuring quality of the EGR material starts from revision and editing by qualified smaller MoE teams, to verification at school level, ending with an independent MoE-led review committee towards ensuring the quality of the material prior to reaching the stage of production and distribution.
- The consultation with MoE senior leadership on the quality of stories resulted in an agreement with MoE to nominate well-known story writers in both Dari and Pashto to support reviewing and improvement of stories. Project experts will work with the nominated story writers to ensure that the revised stories meet all the EGR criteria.

- The Project has complemented the few MoE illustrators with an illustrator from the Project consortium and by procuring the services of an external expert illustrator in order to keep up with the speed of material development.

IR 2.2

Evidence-based early grade reading instructional materials in use in public and CBE classrooms

Progress achieved in Q4

- In preparation for the planned printing and distribution of the EGR material for the pilot in Herat, Nangarhar and Kabul provinces, *Afghan Children Read* began the review of existing information on printing and distribution systems of text books within the formal schooling system in Afghanistan. Project staff held meetings with the Publishing Department of the MoE and discussed existing printing and distribution systems and procedures. In addition, a rapid desk review of printing and distribution system was conducted, and a data collection tool was designed for obtaining more info the current printing and distribution systems

IR 2.3

Evidence-based early grade reading curriculum and instruction program implemented at the school level in public and CBE schools

Progress achieved in Q4

- ACR has reached a final agreement with the MoE that the pilot provinces will be Herat, Nangarhar and Kabul (only two districts). Following an intensive desk review of MoE's EMIS data and discussions among ACR partners, ACR proposed to MoE at the 2nd meeting of the EGR Steering Group meeting an initial list of pilot districts and cohorts for the three provinces (Tables 1 and 2). Criteria considerations included security and linguistic dominance for this initial proposal. The final consensus on the list of districts and schools for the pilot will be reached during the field trips to be conducted to each of the provinces during quarter I of FY 2017.

Table 1: Initial YR2 Cohorts (districts, schools, CBEs, and teachers)

Cohort	Province	# of District	Language	Public Schools ³	CBEs	Teachers
C1	Herat	9	Dari	237	150	625
	Kabul	2	Dari and Pashto	50	0	200
C2	Nangarhar	11	Pashto	196	225	625
	Total	22		483	375	1450

³ * These numbers of public schools and CBEs represent the majority of schools in the initially identified districts. Numbers on CBEs is based on data provided by NGOs and will require verification.

Table 2: Initial Targets for Pilot Districts, Schools, Teachers and Students for Public Schools based on EMIS data:

S. No.	Province	District	Language	Schools	Students	Teachers
1	Nangarhar	Kama	Pashto	13	435	27
2	Nangarhar	Kuz kunar/ Khawa	Pashto	21	550	43
3	Nangarhar	Goshta	Pashto	11	615	21
4	Nangarhar	Jalalabad	Pashto	20	2,555	41
5	Nangarhar	Behsud	Pashto (majority) & Dari	23	2,178	47
6	Nangarhar	Surkhrud	Pashto (majority) & Dari	27	1,505	54
7	Nangarhar	Rudat	Pashto	22	1,264	44
8	Nangarhar	Bati Kot	Pashto	22	2,524	44
9	Nangarhar	Shinwar (Ghani Khail)	Pashto	14	1,684	29
10	Nangarhar	Mohmand Dara	Pashto	14	1,451	28
11	Nangarhar	Lal Pur	Pashto	8	650	16
		Total Nangarhar		196	15,411	393
1	Herat	Herat	Dari	41	2,430	82
2	Herat	Kurkh	Dari	28	1,050	56
3	Herat	Zenda Jan	Dari	15	206	30
4	Herat	Ghoreyan	Dari	26	1,695	51
5	Herat	Kuhsan	Dari (majority)	19	783	39
7	Herat	Chesht i Sharif	Dari (majority)	10	310	20
8	Herat	Kushk (Rubatak i Sangi)	Dari	34	1,561	67
9	Herat	Guzara	Dari	44	2,418	88
10		Oba	Dari	21	1,371	42
		Total Herat		237	11,824	474
1	Kabul Province	Bagrami	Pashto & Dari	28	2,451	112
2	Kabul Province	Shakar Dara	Pashto & Dari	22	1,208	88
		Total Kabul Province		50	3,659	200
		Grand Total		484	30,894	1,067

Security & Safety Key:

Normal

Low

Medium

- The consensus on *Afghan Children Read*'s pilot districts and schools will be informed by the school cluster and language mapping research planned for Q1, YR2 of FY 2017 to be conducted jointly with the Planning and Policy TWG. During Q4, YR1 of FY 2016, and in preparation for conducting these two research activities next quarter, the project team drafted instruments for school cluster and language mapping. It is planned that these two research activities will cover the entire population of the pilot districts and school.

Challenges

- The reliability of school data from EMIS and CBE data from other sources.

Actions to be taken

- *Afghan Children Read* technical staff will visit a random sample of schools and CBE's in each Province as a verification of the school information data received.
- The Project will meet with PED and DED representatives, and NGO/donors supporting CBEs for verification of school and CBE data.

IR 2.4

Procedures and systems for supervision, coaching, and monitoring of teachers and students implemented

Progress achieved in Q4

This work had not yet begun in YR1 (FY 2016). The activities around supervision, coaching and monitoring of teachers and students is being planned for and designed at the time of this writing and implementation will commence with the pilot start-up in March 2017 in Herat.

IR 2.5

Partnerships with parents, school shuras, communities, the private sector, and nontraditional actors to increase equitable access to a quality education increased

Progress achieved in Q4

Planning of IR 2.5 activities took place in Q4 of YR1, but implementation has not yet begun.

Challenges

- The review and analysis of SMES⁴ results emerging from the EGR Survey Project assessment has not started as this data is not yet available.
- The Social Mobilization TWG has been slow in getting activated.

Actions to be taken

- *Afghan Children Read* will keep following up with EGR survey of the results of the assessment.

⁴ School Management Effectiveness Study

- As implementation of the pilot moves into the provinces, the Social Mobilization TWG will be more fully engaged.

IR2 OVERVIEW SUMMARY FOR YEAR I

Afghan Children Read's progress for activities under IR2 has been significant. The calendar for materials production was tight and the MoE has demonstrated a full commitment to the effort with the assignment of 55 personnel to work daily at the Project office for six weeks. The Deputy Minister for General Education and the General Director of Curriculum made regular visits to the *Afghan Children Read* project site to meet with their personnel and understand the process by which they were involved in writing the reading materials for grades 1 and 2. At the time of this writing, the timeline for the production of materials was met, and they are getting prepared for verification in the field. Additionally, USAID's continued oversight and support to this critical activity was welcomed and evident with regular visits to meet with both MoE and Project personnel.

Some lessons learned in YRI are the following:

- Provide opportunities for feedback loops with beneficiaries and stakeholders to ensure ownership and effective activity implementation.
- Use feedback loops to adjust activity implementation when needed.
- Ensure MoE technical EGR capacity development through real-time, hands-on work under the guidance of internationally recognized experts.

Below is a review of overall IR2 achievements in YRI:

Successes achieved in YRI

- Agreement with MoE on the Rapid Production Model, process and timeframe for the development of EGR material for grades 1 to 3.
- Establishment of the MoE's EGR materials development core teams including writers, illustrators, graphic designers and editors.
- Start of the capacity building of the MoE material development teams on EGR instruction and material development guiding principles and approaches.
- Development and leveling of the scope and sequence in both Dari and Pashto for grades 1 to 3.
- Drafting of EGR G1 and G2 materials both the Student Book and Teacher Guide in Dari and Pashto.
- Development of criteria for reading texts for G1 to 3.
- Development of Dari and Pashto teaching order for G1 to 3.
- Development of weekly schedule for Reading and Writing in Mother Tongue.
- Development of Early Grade Reading and Writing Competences for Grade 1 and 2.
- Development *Afghan Children Read's* cluster assessment and language mapping tools and methodology.

- Completed drafts of two Early Literacy Course syllabuses as part of the pre-service primary diploma supported by GIZ to be implemented by TED.
- Initial identification of the *Afghan Children Read's* pilot districts and target number of schools, teachers and students.

Challenges in YR1

- Short time-frame for MoE's material development team to apply newly-founded understanding of EGR method activities to write good stories that meet the EGR instructional criteria.
- Limited number of capable MoE illustrators assigned to the materials development team.

Associated Actions

- *Afghan Children Read's* approach for ensuring quality of the EGR material involved several layers of revision and quality assurance and includes provision of real-time training during the material development process.
- Supplementing MoE illustrators with illustrators from outside the MoE.

Project Deliverables

In this Quarter, considerable time was spent working on key deliverables of the project:

- The YR2 Annual Work Plan (AWP) (October 2016-September 2017) was submitted on August 30, to USAID. The YR1 work plan was used as critical input in a consultative process for the YR2 work plan development. It not only covers the activities for the first year of the project, but it also provides a detailed insight to the *Afghan Children Read's* scope, technical approach, early grade reading assessments, and other important aspects over the life of project.
- The Branding and Marking manual was resubmitted to USAID on July 14, 2016 after addressing the revisions requested by USAID. The final manual was approved by USAID.
- The project's Grants Manual was also resubmitted to USAID on July 14, 2016 after addressing the revisions requested by USAID. The final manual is awaiting approval by USAID.
- The Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (PMEP) was submitted one month after the approval of YR1 AWP. Upon Submission, Creative received a note from USAID that the PMEP will stay on hold until the USAID Afghanistan mission complete its PMEP.

Monitoring & Evaluation and Communications

I. Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)

As stated above, the PMEP that was submitted to USAID during Q4 is pending the response from USAID on the mission PMEP development. However, ACR began initial data collection based on the draft indicators that were included in the submitted draft PMEP. Annex 2 constitutes a

reporting matrix against the draft indicators and provides the data collected during this reporting period by the project M&E.

2. Project Communications

Two success stories are submitted with this report (Annexes 3 and 4). The submitted stories highlight the early success achieved by *Afghan Children Read* in its collaboration with the MoE through the material development work completed during this reporting period.

Project Management

1. Quarterly Budget Report

The Q4 Budget Report is included as Annex 10. Creative does not report on an accruals basis, but has included projections for October 2016.

2. Cost Data Report

The Cost Data Report will be annexed to the YR 2 Annual Report. *Afghan Children Read* is in the process of finalizing the method for cost reporting with USAID. This process is expected to be finalized by the middle of Q1 of FY '17.

3. Key Meetings/Field Trips Conducted during YR 1

The field trips conducted during YR1 were critical for the support of *Afghan Children Read's* operational and programmatic start-up activities. Creative HQ assistance ensured that HR systems were effectively established and that a skeleton staff was in place. This assistance also supported the handover of furniture and equipment to *Afghan Children Read* from closed USAID projects. The participation of HQ's Practice Area Director (an expert in educational systems) in early meetings with USAID and the MoE ensured a strong and positive engagement with the Host Country. The technical support provided by world recognized experts in EGR ensured the development and implementation of cutting-edge EGR workshops designed for the Material and Development Team appointed by the MoE. Detailed trip reports are attached as Annex-12.

Position	Date	Purpose
Director, Practice Area	April 30 – May 11 June 14 - 27	Project start up, 2016 Work Plan
Acting Project Director	April 30 – May 11	Project Start Up
Program Associate	June 14 – 27	Project Start Up, 2016 Work Plan
Senior Associate – Reading Specialist	June 17 – 30	Ministry of Education Early Grade Reading Workshop
Senior Project Manager	May 13 – 27	Project start up and procurement oversight
Procurement Officer	June 10 – July 20	Project start up and procurement oversight
Project Director	July 30 – August 16	Provide direct support to project regarding Y2 annual work plan, working with key stakeholders
Senior Associate – Reading Specialist	August 12 – 17	Lead materials development workshop with Ministry of Education

Position	Date	Purpose
Senior Multilingual Education Specialist – SIL-Lead	August 12 – 30 Sept	Support Ministry of Education material development teams
Field IT Engineer	August 29 – 8 Sept	Support network and IT set up
Travel Planned for Quarter I Year 2		
Program Manager - IRC	28 Oct – 11 Nov	Support the integration of Healthy School concepts into EGR material and teacher training
Project Director	30 Nov – 16 Dec	Support the project work on budget and pipeline analysis and onboarding of Senior Ed. Advisor
Director, Practice Area	30 Nov – 7 Dec	Support the project work on budget and pipeline analysis, meet with MoE officials on progress to date, and research activities.
Senior Associate – Reading Specialist	1 -26 Oct, 15-31 Dec	Lead materials development workshop and teacher training with Ministry of Education
Senior Associate – Capacity Development	6 Oct – 3 Nov	Lead the OCDP development
Senior Multilingual Education Specialist – SIL-Lead	1 Oct – 6 Oct, 23 Oct – 16 Dec	Support Ministry of Education material development teams and new material verification
Consultant – Education Advisor	7 Nov 16 – 5 Feb 17	Fill for the role of Senior Education Advisor and support initial stages of teacher training

Annex – I Afghan Children Read Activities Chart Analysis

Please find Annex I as a separate document.

Annex - 2

ACR - Summary of Targets Vs Actuals As of 30 September 2016

	Indicator	Reporting Frequency	Baseline Value	5-year Targets (EOP)	Cumulative Actuals against the 5-year targets (to date)	Annual Targets for Year I	Cumulative Actuals for Year I
	Goal: Improved EGR outcomes for 1-3 grade public and CBE students in target regions						
1	Proportion of students who, by the end of two grades of primary schooling, demonstrate that they can read and understand the meaning of grade level text	Midline and Endline					
2	Percent of learners who drop out of the targeted educational opportunity prior to completion	Every two years					
3	Learner retention rate	Annual					
	Result 1: The MoE, at all levels, is able to implement an evidence-based Early Grade Reading curriculum and instruction program that benefits students in both formal and CBE classes						
4	Percentage of primary school teachers who demonstrate application of reading instruction methods in classroom teaching.	Annual					
	IR 1.1. Capacity of MoE, at national, provincial, and district levels built to develop, plan/budget for, manage, implement, and monitor an EGR curriculum and instruction program						
5	Number of administrators and officials successfully trained with USG support	Quarterly			55		55
6	Number of teachers/educators who successfully completed in-service training or received intensive coaching or mentoring with USG support	Quarterly					
	IRI.2: Policies, standards and benchmarks that support improved EGR instruction in public and community-based education classes developed						
7	Number of laws, policies, regulations or guidelines developed or modified to improve primary grade reading programs or increase equitable access.	Annual					

Annex-2 continued

	IR 1.3. National and sub-national EGR assessments, data collection, and analysis systems established						
	Number of standardized learning assessments supported by USG	Annual					
	Result 2: An evidence-based EGR curriculum and instruction program piloted that improves EGR outcomes for 1-3 grade public and CBE students						
9	Number of learners enrolled in USG-supported primary schools or equivalent non-school-based settings	Annual					
10	Number of learners receiving reading interventions at primary level	Annual					
11	Number of learners in grades 1, 2 or 3 in pilot program who improved their reading skills	Midline & Endline					
	IR 2.1. Evidence-based EGR curriculum and instruction program developed						
12	Number of textbooks and other teaching and learning materials provided with USG assistance	Annual					
	IR2.2: Evidence-based EGR instructional materials in use in public and CBE classrooms						
13	Proportion of teachers using EGR instructional materials in primary and CBE classes.	Twice per year for each cohort.					
	IR2.3: Evidence-based EGR curriculum and instructional program implemented at the school level in public and CBE schools						
14	Number of learners entering the entry grade/year of the targeted educational opportunity	Annual					
15	Number of public primary schools & CBE classes in which the evidence-based EGR curriculum or instructional program was implemented	Annual					
	IR 2.4. Procedures and systems for supervision, coaching, and monitoring of teachers and students implemented						
16	Number of effective teacher supervision, coaching and monitoring visits conducted	Quarterly					
	IR2.5: Partnerships with parents, school management shuras, communities, the private sector, and non-traditional actors to increase equitable access to a quality education increased						
17	Number of PTAs or similar 'school' governance structures supported	Quarterly					
18	Number of reading focus grants implemented by local NGOs	Annual					

Annex – 3

Afghan Girl Follows Her Passion as Illustrator

**Engaging curriculum
means engaged early
grade readers**



Photo: Afghan Children Read Project

Beheshta believes that engaging, illustrated stories could help early grade readers to improve their reading skills.

“Girls can bring changes in every aspect of education development.

Beheshta,
Illustrator, Afghanistan Ministry of
Education

Beheshta has always dreamed of becoming an illustrator. But coming from an educated family, she was under considerable pressure to study law and become a lawyer. Ultimately, her passion for illustration convinced her family that she should pursue her dreams as a professional artist.

While Beheshta still battles against the lack of community support for her career as an artist, she is intent on proving to her younger siblings and other youth from her community that a brighter future awaits them and that they can follow their dreams.

Beheshta’s dream is being answered through her role as an illustrator for the Afghanistan Ministry of Education’s Curriculum department where she has the opportunity to work on USAID’s Afghan Children Read project.

She is proving to her community that women artists can make a big contribution to an important cause: improving education.

“Girls can bring changes in every aspect of education development. I do my best to illustrate the books in order to easily grab and hold the attention of early grade readers,” she says.

Started in April 2016, the Afghan Children Read project will support education service delivery through building the capacity of the Ministry of Education to provide an evidence-based early grade reading (EGR) program in Dari and Pashto for students in grades 1 to 3 in both formal and community-based education schools.

As part of Afghan Children Read, curricular experts, illustrators and books designers have been involved in a six-week training and on-the-job support program related to the development of materials for students in grades 1-3. Beheshta has been a member of this materials development team. She has not only gained the technical know-how, but also the practical soft skills necessary to illustrate stories based on new EGR standards.

Today, Beheshta is pursuing her dream as a professional illustrator and daily using these best practices through sketching and coloring the stories into pictures that she believes will generate a tremendous impact on improving the skills of early grade readers.

Telling Our Story

U.S. Agency for International Development
Washington, DC 20523-1000
<http://stories.usaid.gov>

Workshop Helps MoE to Prepare New Curricula

Better curriculum for brighter futures



Photo: Afghan Children Read Project

A teacher trainer is editing the Pashto and Dari materials developed during a 60-day practical session from August 21 to October 5, 2016.

“Improving learning outcomes in early literacy, like Afghan Children Read is doing, is one of the ways to ensure the future of Afghanistan’s children is bright.”

Ministry of Education workshop participant

Telling Our Story

U.S. Agency for International Development
Washington, DC 20523-1000
<http://stories.usaid.gov>

The Afghanistan education system is emerging from a devastating and prolonged period of civil war and has significantly lagged behind most neighboring countries in nearly all education statistics. Since the end of the civil war, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has structured its policy to focus on improving education and literacy skills at large in the country.

Despite increased primary enrolment rates across the country, the lack of trainings and resources has not allowed teachers to learn and apply new knowledge on early grade reading (EGR) principles in primary level classrooms. USAID is providing support to the Ministry of Education (MoE) by funding Afghanistan Children Read, a five-year, \$70 million project.

Afghan Children Read plans to advance national literacy and learning across the country.

As part of its project activities, key personnel from the MoE’s curriculum and research departments worked closely with project experts during a three-day workshop held August 18 to 20, 2016. This workshop kicked off the development of new materials based on EGR international standards. In total, 55 key personnel from the MOE, including 15 female staff, participated in the workshop. As a follow up, the project, in partnership with MOE, launched six weeks of EGR material development in Dari and Pashto.

“Learning is not done by just listening to new information and discussing it. In the case of materials development, it also needs to be applied, reflected on and linked back to the teaching and discussion that happened before,” says the project’s senior multilingual education specialist.

With 433 schools and 867 teachers in Herat and Nangarhar provinces, the MoE is committed to applying all these principles through practical lessons in the targeted provinces.

One MoE participant says it best: “Improving learning outcomes in early literacy, like Afghan Children Read is doing, is one of the ways to ensure the future of Afghanistan’s children is bright. I believe, these principles applied in the new set of materials for grades 1-3 will improve children’s reading skills and provide the early grade students with the skills to learn other subjects easily.”

Annex – 5 Early Grade Reading Steering Group 1st Meeting Minutes

Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
Ministry of Education
Early Grade Reading Steering Group 1st Meeting Minutes

The first meeting of Early Grade Reading Steering Group (EGR-SG) was held on July 27, 2016 at 1400 hours at Safi Landmark Hotel, Kabul. The meeting was chaired by the honorable Deputy Minister Education and attended by the members including representatives from concerned departments of Ministry of Education (MoE) and international NGOs. The list of participants is placed at Annex-A.

In his opening remarks, the Deputy Minister MoE welcomed and highlighted importance of the EGR-SG. The Chief of Party *Afghan Children Read* conveyed USAID representative's regret to attend the meeting.

Senior M&E Specialist *Afghan Children Read* shared the agenda for the meeting and the house endorsed the agenda placed at Annex-B. Agenda-wise working paper/handouts were provided both in Dari and English to the members.

Agenda-wise proceedings, decisions and action points are summarized in the table below:

S.#	Proceedings and Decisions	Action Points	Responsibility
1	Afghan Children Read Results Framework and implementation approach		
1.1	Afghan Children Read's results framework and technical approach were briefly presented for the members	None	None
2	EGR Steering Group Formation and Terms of Reference (TOR)		
2.1	The formation of EGR-SG was shared by Deputy Minister MoE and suggestions for the membership were sought from the house. He also pointed out to keep the group specific and manageable. After the discussion, some other departments were suggested to be included in the group. Regarding Provincial Education department (PED) representation, it was pointed out that it might not be operationally feasible for them to attend the meeting every month. However, PED Kabul province or Kabul City could be included as member.	<p>2.1.1. The member departments would review their representation. Heads of departments will nominate one persons as an alternative who would attend the group meetings in case of their absence.</p> <p>2.1.2. Representatives to be from: - Kabul Education University - Ministry of Haj & Religious Affairs, and - Ministry of Women Affairs Should be included as members.</p>	<p>Heads of member departments.</p> <p>Chief of Party and Policy & Planning Department</p>
2.2	The SG TOR was also reviewed in detailed. Overall the TORs was agreed upon with slight insertion.	2.2.1. The first/introductory para of the TORs, should also mention about "use of ICT" in the text.	Chief of Party

Annex- 5

S.#	Proceedings and Decisions	Action Points	Responsibility
	The Secretary of the EGR-SG would send to SG members the agenda and handouts prior to the meeting, and minutes a week after the meeting	2.2.2. Prepare and send meeting agenda and meeting minutes.	Secretary EGR-SG/ Chief of Party
3	EGR Technical Task Forces; formation and TOR		
3.1	The members were informed that five thematic Task Forces (TFs) were formed in consultation and mutual agreement with the MoE. The formation of TFs was shared.	3.1.1. The lead department for each TF will review the nomination of official to represent in their respective TFs and provide the Afghan Children Read with the names of official to attend in the TFs. 3.1.2. TFs can meet every week for the first couple of months, then they can meet twice a month or as required.	General Directors/ Directors of TF lead departments.
4	Draft outputs suggested by EGR Technical Task Forces meetings on July 19th		
4.1	Chief of Party Afghan Children Read briefed about the workshop held with the MoE departments on July 19, 2016. He also shared that TFs worked on the Logical Framework wherein they suggested various outputs with respect to the early grade reading and project results frame work. It was emphasized that some of the suggested outputs by the TFs are beyond the SOW of the Afghan Children Read and that it won't be possible for ACR to support implementing those outputs.	4.1.1. The members would review the TFs' suggested outputs and would share their inputs in the next SG meeting.	All members
5	Follow up on next actionable steps of the June planning workshop		
5.1	The Chief of Party presented the "Actionable Steps" of the June 20-22, 2016 workshop. Some of the actions were not completed timely due to various reasons. The concerned heads of MoE department explained the status of each actionable step.	5.1.1. The "Actionable Steps" will be followed up among ACR and the concerned MOE department.	Chief of Party and concerned heads of department
6	Next steps: - Holding meetings between ACR and relevant departments		

Annex- 5

S.#	Proceedings and Decisions	Action Points	Responsibility
	- Prepare for ACR's plan (Oct 2016 – Sep 2017)		
6.1	The Chief of Party informed that the project Year-2 (Y-2) work plan would be due end of August 2016. In this regard meetings with the relevant departments will be held to seek their inputs. The General Director Policy & Planning suggested that MoE TFs have already provided their inputs under five technical areas of the project. The project team can build upon the inputs of the TFs to draft their Y-2 plan.	6.1.1. The Afghan Children Read can build on the TFs' inputs from July 19, 2016 workshop and develop its Y-2 work plan. This plan can then be shared with the MoE.	Chief of Party
7	Next meeting: date, time and venue		
7.1	For next meeting August 31, 2016 was suggested. The venue for meetings will be decided later in consultation with the Chair.	7.1.1. The agenda and meeting invitation should be circulated well in advance i.e. at least one week before the meeting along with relevant papers.	Chief of Party/ SG Chair
8	Any Other Business		
8.1	No other business was tabled for consideration.	None	None

The meeting was adjourned at 1700 hours with exchange of vote thanks.

Participants

Annex-A

S. No.	Title	Department
1	Deputy Minister	Ministry of Education (MoE)
2	General Director	Academic Supervision
3	General Director	Curriculum Development
4	Head of Textbook	Curriculum Development
5	Head of Research Standards and Evaluation	Curriculum Development
6	Director General of Teacher Education	Teacher Education
7	Head of Preservice Program of TED	Teacher Education
8	Teaching Affairs Director	Teacher Education
9	Director of Research and Standards	Teacher Education
10	Teacher Education Director/Said Jamaluddin	Teacher Education
11	Dari Department Manager	Teacher Education
12	Pashto Department Manager	Teacher Education
13	Education Officer	UNICEF
14		GIZ-BEPA
15	Education Officer	GIZ-BEPA
16	Girls Education Director	Girls Education Directorate
17	Social Mobilization and Shura Director	Social Mobilization & Shura
18	Advisor	MoE
19	National Program Officer	UNESCO
20	Director	Academic Council
21	DG Plan and Evaluation	General Director Policy & Planning
22	Sr. M&E Specialist	MoE Policy & Planning Department
23	Representative of General Education Directorate	MoE
24	Chief of Party	Afghan Children Read
25	Senior M&E Specialist	Afghan Children Read

Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
Ministry of Education
Early Grade Reading Steering Group Meeting
27 July 2016 – 2-4.30pm

Meeting Agenda

- Afghan Children Read ACR's Results Framework and implementation approach
- EGR Steering Group Formation and TOR
- EGR Technical Task Forces; formation and TOR
- Draft outputs suggested by EGR Technical Task Forces meetings on July 19th
- Follow up on next actionable steps of the June planning workshop (attached)
- Next steps:
 - o Holding meetings between ACR and relevant departments
 - o Prepare for ACR's plan (Oct 2016 – Sep 2017)
- Next meeting: date, time and venue
- AOB

Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
Ministry of Education
Early Grade Reading (EGR) Steering Group (SG)
Terms of References (TOR)

The EGR Steering Group consists of representation of high level officials from relevant MoE Directorates and other stakeholders pertinent to sustainability options for a national EGR program. It is expected that membership of the EGR-SG will remain constant in order to allow progress to be made on mandates. Appointed Sub technical working Groups (or task forces) are formed under the umbrella of the EGR SG to complete very specific time-limited tasks that result in a finite deliverable or event.

Formation of the EGY SG

Internal MoE representation:

- The Deputy Minister for General Education (**Chair**)
- Planning and Evaluation General Director
- Academic Supervision General Director
- Curriculum and Text Books General Director
- Finance General Director
- General Education General Director
- Teacher Education General Director
- Social and Community Mobilization General Director
- Provincial Education Department (PEDs) representative

External entity representation:

- The ACR COP and Senior Education Advisor
- Representation from USAID's education office
- Senior Official from the World Bank/EQUIP
- Representation from UNESCO
- Representation from UNICEF
- Representation from GIZ
- Academic Council
- Representation (2) from Colleges of Education, Institutes of Education, Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs)
- Representation from the Religious Scholars community

The following provides more specific terms of References for the nature and roles of the EGR SG:

- Discuss and recommend EGR policy improvement frameworks that are relevant to key institutional and policy issues to successfully implement a reading strategy: reading curriculum, instructional time, language of instruction, teacher training, continued professional support for teachers, textbooks, and assessment.
- Discuss, endorse and follow up on implementation of EGR relevant Organizational Capacity Development Plans.
- Discuss and endorse EGR standards and benchmarks particularly for students' achievements and teachers' performance.
- Discuss reported results of Early Grade Reading Assessments and recommend corrective actions and/or scale up.
- Ensure synergies among MoE Directorates and stakeholders in support of EGR improvement efforts.
- Ensure coordination among donors' efforts in support of EGR improvement.
- Establish EGR technical task forces, oversee its work and assign them relevant EGR tasks.
- Discuss and provide feedback for the Afghan Children Read work plans, performance indicators, and evaluation / assessment / research reports.

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- Discuss the Afghan Children Read progress towards reaching objectives and against established benchmarks.

EGR SG Meetings:

The EGR SG meets every month or when there is an urgent need. ACR will assume the responsibility of coordinating the EGR SG meeting; preparing the agenda, send invitations, provide the logistical support, taking notes. Discussions and decisions of the EGR SG will be documented and produced in meeting minutes and shared with members

Annex - 6 Early Grade Reading Steering Group 2nd Meeting Minutes

Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Ministry of Education Early Grade Reading Steering Group 2nd Meeting Minutes

The 2nd Meeting of Ministry of Education (MoE) Early Grade Reading Steering Group (EGR-SG) was held on at 1030 hours on August 31, 2016 at MoE. The Deputy Minister General Education chaired the meeting. List of members/participants is appended as Annex-A.

Following agenda was tabled for proceeding the meeting:

1. Welcome & Opening Remarks by the Chair
2. Sharing approval of the Meeting Agenda
3. Endorsement of Steering Group 1st Meeting Minutes
4. Progress Update:
 - 4.1 Over all progress since SG 1st Meeting
 - 4.2 Scope & Sequencing Training and EGR Material Development work
 - 4.3 Selection of Districts and schools for the EGR pilot phase
5. Any Other Business (AOB)

Agenda-wise proceedings, decisions and action points are summarized in the table below:

S. No.	Proceedings and Decisions	Action Points	Responsibility
1	Welcome & Opening Remarks by the Chair		
	The Chair, welcomed the members.	None	None
2	Sharing approval of the Meeting Agenda		
2.1	The Meeting Agenda was shared with the participants and approved for proceedings.	None	None
3	Endorsement of Steering Group 1st Meeting Minutes		
3.1	The minutes of Steering Group (SG) 1 st meeting held on July 27, 2016 were reviewed. Member updated on the status of their respective action points (point by point updates are given at Annex-2) It was unanimously agreed that SG core members (comprising of the General Directors, USAID & ACR) would meet every month, whereas, other members could be called upon based on agenda needs in monthly meeting. The larger SG (including all other stakeholders) will meet each quarter. This will facilitate the proceedings and would be time efficient for all.	3.1.1. Pursuit to 1 st SG meeting decision under agenda point 4, Deputy Minister General Education shared the list of interventions/ outputs with the CoP-ACR based on discussions with the General Directors in order to reflect into ACR Year-2 work plan in accordance with the ACR scope of work. This list is placed at Annex-C.	CoP-ACR
3.2	Minutes were approved by the group.	None	None
4	Progress Update:		
4.1	Over all progress since SG 1st Meeting: The Director M&E-ACR presented the progress updates since 1 st SG meeting. While sharing updates on research and assessment tasks, it was pointed by members that EGR Survey project also conduct policy scan and capacity need assessment.	4.1.1. The Chair suggested to set up a meeting of MoE, ACR and EGR Survey project at earliest on knowing the timelines for the availability of the findings. TOCOR USAID also endorsed the suggestion and expressed that it would facilitate the MoE as well as ACR.	General Director Policy Planning department, USAID-TOCOR and CoP-ACR.

Annex 6

S. No.	Proceedings and Decisions	Action Points	Responsibility
	CoP-ACR responded that ACR would build on EGR Survey project findings and work on Institutional Capacity Assessment (ICA) and policy scan. However, ACR heard no specific timelines for the availability of these findings. It would hamper ACR's plan to be in schools for pilot in March 2017. Therefore, ACR would conduct the policy scan and run other assessments. When the EGR Survey findings are available, they would be taken into consideration.		
	On OCDP updates, the General Director Academic Supervision pointed out that ICA tool used by EGR Survey project was so generic and seemed to be same for all the departments. He expressed the concern that ICA tool could not capture the real capacity needs being not specifically tailored for each function/department.	It was agreed that capacity needs assessment for OCDP should be specific to the role and functionality of each department.	CoP-ACR
4.2	<p>Scope & Sequencing Training and EGR Material Development work:</p> <p>The General Director Curriculum Development & Textbooks (CD&TB) department presented the curriculum development progress by the department with ACR support. He appreciated the approach and process employed for curriculum development by the ACR. He commented that for the first time the department writing teams are trained and involved extensive for eight weeks in developing curriculum themselves with support from international experts. He expressed his full satisfaction on the process and hoped that the curriculum being developed would be instrumental in improving reading skills of early grade students in Afghanistan.</p> <p>General Director Policy Planning opened discussion around revising other subject books for early grades as it would have impact on students' learning. The discussion covered some policy aspects as well i.e. number of books in Grade-1 etc. The Chair also suggested ACR to look into the possibilities for reviewing and revising other subject books as well for Grade-1.</p> <p>The CoP-ACR responded that the project scope covers only language books. However, the capacity of CD&TB department is enhancing and by the end of completing the curriculum development work, the CD&TB department teams will be able to review and revise the other subject books themselves.</p>	<p>4.2.1. Policy & Planning department with other departments would look into the policy aspects of the EGR curriculum i.e. number of books and subjects per grade etc. Based on these policies, the possibilities of revision of other books will be checked.</p> <p>4.2.2. CoP-ACR in consultation with the USAID would look into the possible support for revision of other language books in Grade-1 with respect to language part of those subjects.</p> <p>4.2.3. A joint workshop of all EGR TWGs will be organized to discuss various policy aspects of EGR.</p> <p>4.2.4. Academic supervision may take part in ongoing curriculum development work.</p>	<p>General Director Policy & Planning Department</p> <p>CoP-ACR</p>

Annex 6

S. No.	Proceedings and Decisions	Action Points	Responsibility
	<p>However, ACR would look into the possible technical support in this regard.</p> <p>General Director Academic Supervision also suggested inclusion of academic supervisors in curriculum development process.</p> <p>The Chair also pointed out that benchmarks and standards setting for students and teachers should also be taking into consideration while revising the curriculum to ensure synergies and consistence between them.</p>		
4.3	<p>Selection of Districts and schools for the EGR pilot phase:</p> <p>The Director M&E-ACR explained that EMIS data, rapid stock-taking from the field on languages and safety & security were analyzed to identify the possible districts and number of schools/ teachers/students. He explained that based on said analysis, majority of district falling under normal, low risk and medium risk categories were picked as proposal for the SG's consideration. For CBEs, he informed that detailed data with district-wise breakdown was not available in EMIS as well as with CBE unit, so CBE targets were suggested using a careful estimation based on available data.</p> <p>He also clarified that the proposed list and numbers were just initial and would be verified later in consultation with the MoE based on RERA, language mapping and cluster mapping.</p>	4.3.1. The SG endorsed the initial list of districts and numbers of schools, students & teachers, and tagged the possibility of revisions based on ground situation/security conditions. The endorsed list is placed at Annex-D.	CoP-ACR
5	Any Other Business (AOB)		
	No other business was tabled for consideration.	None	None

The meeting was adjourned at 1230 hours with exchange of vote of thanks.

List of Members Attended

S. No.	Department
1	Deputy Minister, General Education, MoE
2	General Director, Policy
3	General Director, Curriculum Development & Textbooks
4	General Director, Social Mobilization Department
5	On behalf of General Director, Teacher Education Department
6	General Director, Academic Supervision Department
7	TOCOR, USAID
8	Chief of Party Afghan Children Read
9	Director M&E Afghan Children Read

Follow-up/Status Update on Steering Group 1st Meeting Action Points

S.#	Proceedings and Decisions	Action Points & Responsibility	Status Update
1	Afghan Children Read Results Framework and implementation approach		Not Applicable (N/A)
2	EGR Steering Group Formation and Terms of Reference (TOR)		N/A
3	EGR Technical Task Forces; formation and TOR		
3.1	The members were informed that five thematic Task Forces (TFs) were formed in consultation and mutual agreement with the MoE. The formation of TFs was shared.	<p>3.1.1. The lead department for each TF will review the nomination of official to represent in their respective TFs and provide the Afghan Children Read with the names of official to attend in the TFs.</p> <p>3.1.2. TFs can meet every week for the first couple of months, then they can meet twice a month or as required.</p> <p>Responsibility: General Directors/ Directors of TF lead departments.</p>	<p>The formation of task forces/ Technical Working Groups (TWGs) is almost final. Supportive Education Policies & Planning (SEPP) TWS held its 1st meeting as well, whereas, other TWG meetings would be convened in coming weeks.</p> <p>(Agenda Item closed)</p>
4	Draft outputs suggested by EGR Technical Task Forces meetings on July 19th		
4.1	Chief of Party Afghan Children Read briefed about the workshop held with the MoE departments on July 19, 2016. He also shared that TFs worked on the Logical Framework wherein they suggested various outputs with respect to the early grade reading and project results frame work. It was emphasized that some of the suggested outputs by the TFs are beyond the SOW of the Afghan Children Read and that it won't be possible for ACR to support implementing those outputs.	<p>4.1.1. The members would review the TFs' suggested outputs and would share their inputs in the next SG meeting.</p> <p>Responsibility: All members</p>	<p>Deputy Minister General Education shared the list interventions/ outputs with the CoP based on discussions with the General Directors in order to reflect into ACR Year-2 work plan in accordance with the ACR scope of work.</p> <p>(Follow up on action point continues)</p>
5	Follow up on next actionable steps of the June planning workshop		
5.1	The Chief of Party presented the "Actionable Steps" of the June 20-22, 2016 workshop. Some of the actions were not completed timely due to various reasons. The concerned heads of MoE department	<p>5.1.1. The "Actionable Steps" will be followed up among ACR and the concerned MOE department.</p> <p>Responsibility: Chief of Party and concerned heads of department</p>	<p>The actionable steps were covered.</p> <p>(Agenda point closed)</p>

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S.#	Proceedings and Decisions	Action Points & Responsibility	Status Update
	explained the status of each actionable step.		
6	Next steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Holding meetings between ACR and relevant departments - Prepare for ACR's plan (Oct 2016 – Sep 2017) 		
6.1	The Chief of Party informed that the project Year-2 (Y-2) work plan would be due end of August 2016. In this regard meetings with the relevant departments will be held to seek their inputs. The General Director Policy & Planning suggested that MoE TFs have already provided their inputs under five technical areas of the project. The project team can build upon the inputs of the TFs to draft their Y-2 plan.	6.1.1. The Afghan Children Read can build on the TFs' inputs from July 19, 2016 workshop and develop its Y-2 work plan. This plan can then be shared with the MoE. Responsibility: Chief of Party	CoP informed that Y-2 work plan was drafted keeping in view the July 19, 2016 workshop outputs falling under the scope of workshop. Work plan activities related to SEPP TWG were shared with the group in its first meeting on August 30, 2016. Work plan will be shared within other TWGs in their forthcoming meetings to seek more input on. (Agenda item closed)
7	Next meeting: date, time and venue		
7.1	For next meeting August 31, 2016 was suggested. The venue for meetings will be decided later in consultation with the Chair.	7.1.1. The agenda and meeting invitation should be circulated well in advance i.e. at least one week before the meeting along with relevant papers. Responsible: Chief of Party/ SG Chair	For 2 nd meeting of SG, the decision was complied with. (Agenda item closed)

The MoE Departments' Suggested Areas to Cover under ACR

A. Policy and Planning:

- Capacity building of the relevant personnel
- Develop policy of Early Childhood Care and Education
- Developing MoE policy on Early Grade Reading
- Developing policy on textbooks of early grades
- Strengthening EMIS (particularly for early grades)

B. Teacher training

- Develop curriculum for teacher consistent with the student curriculum for early grade:
 - Standards
 - Framework
 - Syllabus
 - Teacher guides
 - Textbooks
 - ICT and other supplementary material
- Extracurricular activities
- Capacity building of the teachers
- Train few master degree teachers to act as master trainers for early grade trainings in future

C. Learning assessment

- Capacity building of the newly established departments
 - Staff
 - Office staff
 - Master degree specialists for future
 - Equipment (Tables, computers, printers and etc.)
 - System
 - Policy/procedures
- Development exam system for learning assessment
- Development system for school level mentoring and coaching
- Develop a standardized database/software for learning assessment
- Train school managers in early grades reading and learning assessment

D. Curriculum department

- Develop curriculum for early grade students
 - Standards
 - Framework
 - Syllabus
 - Teacher guides
 - Textbooks
 - ICT and other supplementary material
- Extracurricular activities
- Capacity building of the staff
- Train few master degree teachers to act as master trainers for early grade trainings in future
- Print the school's textbooks for early grades (1-6)
- Print additional story books for children of early grades

Annex 6

- BBC
- IRC
- Mosawer
- Shanti Volunteers
- Marhoon
- More

E. Social Mobilization, relationship with families and communities and reading environment

- Support school shuras
- Establish a system to link the families and communities with the schools
- Involve schools shuras in:
 - Monitoring of out of school children
 - Monitoring the teacher's absence
 - Reading of children at home and mosques
 - Linking teacher with the families to monitor the students work at home
- Class libraries for early grades
- Early grade special classrooms
- Develop charts and posters with messages and pictures for improvements of early grade reading and thinking skills

Initial Target Districts, Schools, Teachers and Students for ACR Pilot can be found on page 21.

Annex – 7 Technical Work Groups

Technical Work Groups

S. No.	Task Force Technical Areas	Lead Department	Member Departments
1	Education Systems and Management	Academic Supervision	EMIS; Teacher Education; Learning Assessment; Academic Supervision; Curriculum Development
2	Supportive Education Policies and Planning	Policy & Planning	Advisor MoE; Curriculum Development; Teacher Education; Supervision; Academic Supervision; Academic Council
3	Community and Parental Engagement	Social Mobilization	Teacher Education; Girls Education; Policy & Planning
4	Instructional Material Development	Curriculum Development	Planning & Supervision; Academic Supervision
5	Teacher Education	Teacher Education	Curriculum Development; Academic Supervision; Policy & Planning

Technical Work Group Members

S.#	Position	Department
1	Academic Member	Academic Council
2	Specialist	EMIS
3	Specialist	EMIS
4	Academic Member	TED
5	Test Administrator	Learning Assessment
6	DG	Academic Supervision
7	MoE Plan	Sr. M&E Specialist
8	Head of Languages/Pashto	Curriculum
1	Advisor	MoE
2	Head of Languages Section	Curriculum
3	Academic Member	TED
4	Officer	MoE/Plan
5	Officer	Supervision
6		Academic Council
7	Manager	DoPE
1	SMNC	DSMS/MoE

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2	Teacher	TED
S.#	Position	Department
3	Teacher	TED
4	Specialist	GE
5	Director	MoE
6	Evaluation Specialist	DoP
1	Senior M&E Specialist	MoE
2	Curriculum Member	Pashto Department
3	Evaluation Officer of Academic Supervision	Academic Supervision
4	Girls Education Director	
5	Language Manager	Curriculum
6	Director	Curriculum
1	Academic Member/Pashto Department	Curriculum
2	Academic Member	Teacher Education
3	Academic Member	Teacher Education
4	Academic Member	Teacher Education
5	Students Enrollment Increment Manager	
6	Specialist	Academic Supervision
7	Teaching Affairs Director	TED
8		Plan Directorate

Annex – 8 ACR Scope and Sequence MD workshop

Please find Annex 8 as a separate document.

Annex – 9 Draft Syllabus Primary Diploma Language Development and Early Literacy

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT SYLLABUS

Rationale

Language shapes our understanding of our world and ourselves. It is the primary means by which we relate to others and is central to the intellectual, social and emotional development of all children. It is through language that children shape and interpret the world around them. They need to be able to use language competently, and appropriately to their stage of development to convey their thoughts, emotions and reflections. In the years of primary schooling from Grades 1 to 6, Dari or Pashtu is the medium of instruction and children need to use these languages in their spoken and written forms. In order to help children do this, student teachers need an understanding of how children learn language and the stages of language development in children in Grades 1-6. They need to become aware of the importance of mother tongue instruction while at the same time be able to include those children whose language is not the medium of instruction in all aspects of classroom instruction and activities. Teachers also need to be aware of their own language use. Children should be exposed to a variety of meaningful language experiences and the teacher of language should draw on a range of language teaching methodologies and techniques suitable for the early years to keep children interested, challenged and achieving success. Children continue to develop their imagination and ability to think critically, as well as broadening their understanding of other cultures through the study of language. As their control and understanding of the language develops, they become more confident and capable of using it to identify and clarify issues and to question and challenge information. Language competency of this type is essential if children are to succeed at school and grow into adults who love learning and who are positive contributing members of Afghan society.

This subject is composed of four credits. Two credits are taught in Year 1 Semester 2 and Two in Year 2 Semester 3. In the first part of this subject, student teachers learn how children themselves develop in their language. This part of the subject is more theoretical. In the second part, they learn techniques to use in class to help children develop their skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

This topic complements Early Literacy 1 and 2 where the early skills of reading and writing are dealt with.

Annex-9 This is draft of the syllabus

About this subject

This subject is closely linked to Early Literacy. It spans two semesters: More theoretical aspects are dealt with in the first part in Year 1 while practical aspects are dealt with in Year 2

Objectives

By the end of this subject, student teachers will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of language learning theories and how they apply to young learners in terms of both first and second language acquisition
- Identify the stages of first language development in young learners
- Explain the importance of mother tongue as the medium of instruction
- Plan lessons that are appropriate for multi-lingual classes
- Distinguish between social and academic language
- Apply their knowledge about how children learn language to provide opportunities for children to communicate and become competent users of the chosen language.
- Make use of a variety of techniques and methodologies specific to teaching young learners at the different stages of their language development (first language).
- Make use of a variety of techniques and methodologies specific to teaching young learners at the different stages of their language development (second language).
- Identify materials and resources that will support young learners in developing competency in all 4 skill areas
- Plan learner-centred tasks that provide opportunities for young learners to communicate effectively and become competent users of the language
- Construct materials, resources, activities and tasks that promote the love of language learning

Suggested Methodology

The methodology in this subject is interactive and includes classroom visits and observation of children. A large part of Language Development 2 is taken up with in-depth project work. It includes

- Interactive lectures
- Workshops
- Class discussions
- Learner-centered teaching
- Group and pair work
- Class debates
- Individual and group presentations
- Class and individual project work
- Tutorials
- School visits

Evaluation

Final exam	30%
Portfolio	20%
Mid-term test	15%
Class activities	10%
Project	10%
Assignment / essay	15%

Year 1 Semester 2

TOPIC	SKILLS / COMPETENCIES Student Teachers will be able to.....	ACTIVITIES	EVALUATION
Weeks 1: Theories of Language Learning 1 Piaget Skinner Chomsky	demonstrate their understanding of 3 theories of child language learning and their relevance to the Afghan classroom	Jigsaw reading where different groups have different theories Group discussion	Results of class activities included in portfolio
Week 2: Theories of Language Learning 2 Aitchison Vygotsky Krashen	demonstrate their understanding of 3 theories of child language learning and their relevance to the Afghan classroom	Buzz group lecture	Results of class activities included in portfolio
Week 3: Theories of Language Learning 3 Revision of the Theories	identify the importance of knowledge about language learning theory	Create a mind map	Completed mind-maps included in portfolio
Week 4: Application of theories to the Primary Classroom	describe the application of the theories to the classroom	Application of knowledge of language learning theories by working in groups and creating posters that demonstrate each theory's application in the language classroom	Posters Reflective essay

Annex-9 This is draft of the syllabus

Weeks 5: The importance of mother tongue 1 What the research tells us Languages in Afghanistan	demonstrate an understanding of the role that the mother tongue plays in the early grades of education and be able to articulate this importance to others including parents and communities	Interactive reading activities e.g. brainstorming answers to pre-reading questions and then reading the text for confirmation	Written exercises in portfolio
Week 6: The Importance of Mother Tongue 2 Home language and school language – bridging the gap	demonstrate an understanding of the difference between language spoken at home and school language	Brainstorming of challenges children might face bridging between home and school List of techniques which could be used to bridge between home and school. STs rank the techniques according to those which are most useful	List of techniques Written assignment
Weeks 7: Differences between learning a mother tongue and other languages as a child 1 Acquisition vs. learning	describe key differences between young children (Grade 1+) learning a first and other language and how this affects teaching and learning	Interactive workshop focusing on participants' practical experiences and observations of language learning in Afghanistan	Classroom activities
Week 8: The role of errors and error correction The role of errors The role of teacher talk in language learning	demonstrate their understanding of the role of errors in language learning	Practical classroom observation (school visit) using structured observation form Providing examples of types of teacher talk	Case study/observation Short written assignment
MID-SEMESTER EVALUATION			
Weeks 9: Stages of first language development 1 The typical stages of language development in children, 6-9 years	identify the typical stages of language development in children aged 6 - 9	Wall dictation Pyramid brainstorm	Classroom activities

Annex-9 This is draft of the syllabus

Weeks 10: Stages of first language development 2 The typical stages of language development in children, 9-12 years	identify the typical stages of language development in children aged 9 - 12	Error identification KWL reading Preparation for observation of children and making judgements about linguistic development Worksheet putting linguistic stages in order	Classroom activities Observation notes submitted in portfolio Project
Weeks 11: Characteristics of a multi-lingual classroom	identify the challenges of multi- lingual classrooms and provide possible solutions	Role play Scenarios	Demonstration through role play and scenarios
Week 12: Helping children make the transition from home language to language of instruction	plan strategies for teaching children from a range of language backgrounds and with different levels of language competence.	Interactive workshop focusing on linguistic issues related to making transitions from home to school	Classroom activities
Week 13: Classes where all children have a different home language Classes where individual children in class speak a different language	produce a lesson plan which could be used to teach children who have different home languages	Group lesson planning based on a class with children who have different mother tongues Microteaching	Lesson plan Microteaching
Weeks 14: Oral and written language Differences between oral and written languages (Dari / Pashto)	Identify and describe key differences between oral and written Dari and Pashto in terms of social and academic registers	Brainstorm differences Class debate.	Written assignment

Annex-9 This is draft of the syllabus

Week 15: Basic Oral Communication Skills (BICS) Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency	describe and provide examples of BICS and CALP	Brainstorming examples of BICS and CALP Discussion of ways of developing CALP by providing structured language learning activities giving opportunities for development of academic skills	
Week 16: Developing CALP Practical techniques of moving towards academic language use	use a range of practical techniques to help students develop their academic language	Critical examination of texts and exercises e.g. scaffolded written exercises, exercises requiring student teachers to identify features of language which children need to develop	Results of written exercise
SUBMISSION OF PORTFOLIO			
END OF SEMESTER EXAMINATION			

TOPIC	SKILLS / COMPETENCIES Student Teachers will be able to.....	ACTIVITIES	EVALUATION
Week 1: Language across the curriculum Developing language skills across all subject areas	describe how the teaching of language is important across all subject areas	Directed group discussion on what is meant by language across the curriculum Individual written exercise summing up the discussions	Question / answer Class participation Written exercise
Week 2: Teaching content and language together; content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)	explain ways of creating an awareness of CLIL in the school community have a range of strategies for teaching content and language together using CLIL techniques where the concept is taught at the same time as the world	School policy document: work in groups and create a draft document for a school to use to encourage an approach to language and the curriculum where language is reinforced and extended through the teaching of all subjects	Group presentation of policy document Policy document to be included in the portfolio
Week 3: Speaking and listening skills in children, Grades 1-6	demonstrate their understanding of how to develop speaking and listening skills in children	Guided reading Interactive workshop Group work	Question / answer Classroom activities
Week 4: Developing oral communication skills Using discussion to learn	provide opportunities for children to develop their speaking and listening skills Create teaching material and plan activities for their teaching that focuses on the development of listening and speaking skills in students	Project - Task design: STs design a task to be used in class to help children develop their listening and speaking skills	Project

Annex-9 This is draft of the syllabus

Week 5: Developing writing skills in children Grades 4 – 6 Review of early writing in Grade 1-3	explain and develop appropriate writing tasks that focus on introducing the necessary skills to young learners	Reviewing notes from Early Writing Developing writing tasks to be used in class with young learners	Results of class work
Week 6: Composition (articulating ideas and structuring them) Process writing	identify ways to improve writing skills in young learners assist learners to see writing as a process: planning, drafting, editing	Looking at a sample piece of written work and marking it with a view to helping the learners to improve	Marking of written work results
Week 7: Developing reading skills Review of early literacy Higher level reading skills	list higher level reading skills distinguish between fact and opinion in reading texts	Loop input: practising higher level reading skills by using a reading passage about teaching reading with follow up questions	Results of class work
Week 8: Skimming and scanning Reading for information vs. reading for pleasure Critical reading: Fact vs. Opinion	use higher order thinking to move beyond factual questions i.e. inferring meaning from context	Read a fictional text and in groups create appropriate higher order questions	Group response to questions and answers task
MID-SEMESTER EVALUATION			
Week 9: Expanding children's vocabulary Active vs. passive vocabulary What does it mean to know a word: connotation, collocation, language register	have a range of techniques to help children expand their written and oral vocabulary	Worksheet containing words which are used wrongly to elicit what it means when we say we "know" a word.	Classroom activities and worksheet

Annex-10

Annex-10 Annual Financial Report

Creative Associates International

Client: USAID/Afghanistan

Contract/Task Order AID-306-TO-16-00003

Title: Afghan Children Read

April 6, 2016 - April 5, 2021

Date: 10/26/2016

i. Quarterly Budget Report

I. Quarterly Budget Report										
Line Items	Approved Budget	Expenditures through 30 Sep 2016	Expenditure Rate			Projections		Total Actual + Projections Costs	Available Funds	(%) Percent Available Fund
			3 Mo. Average 1 Jul - 30 Sep, 2016	5 Mo. Average* 1 May - 30 Sep 2016	LOP Average	Accrued**	Pipeline 1 Oct - 31 Dec, 2016			
			(C)	(D)	(D)	(E)	(F)			
	(A)	(B)						(G)	(H)	(I)
LABOR	6,250,166	299,577	62,287	59,915.34	59,915.34	-	308,787	608,363	5,641,803	90.3%
FRINGE BENEFITS	2,362,123	113,576	23,581	22,715	22,715	-	116,628	230,204	2,131,919	90.3%
ALLOWANCES	3,315,718	102,350	24,586	20,470	20,470	-	89,035	191,385	3,124,333	94.2%
CONSULTANTS	276,380	9,516	133	1,903	1,903	-	41,108	50,624	225,756	81.7%
TRAVEL, TRANSPORTATION AND PER DIEM	793,590	79,029	22,735	15,806	15,806	-	51,494	130,523	663,067	83.6%
EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES	2,144,940	145,929	38,134	29,186	29,186	-	302,690	448,618	1,696,322	79.1%
OTHER DIRECT COSTS	2,543,867	248,362	39,315	49,672	49,672	-	114,431	362,793	2,181,074	85.7%
SUBCONTRACTS	10,936,852	137,002	45,667	27,400	27,400	-	786,135	923,137	10,013,715	91.6%
SECURITY	4,235,004	262,850	85,219	52,570	52,570	-	217,249	480,099	3,754,905	88.7%
GRANTS UNDER CONTRACT	7,000,000	-	-	-	-	-	300,000	300,000	6,700,000	95.7%
PROGRAM ACTIVITIES	14,168,854	-	-	-	-	-	853,836	853,836	13,315,018	94.0%
TOTAL DIRECT COSTS	54,027,494	1,398,191	341,656	279,638	279,638	-	3,181,391	4,579,582	49,447,912	91.5%
INDIRECT COSTS	11,953,884	418,950	96,787	83,790	83,790	-	705,470	1,124,420	10,829,464	90.6%
GRANTS UNDER CONTACT FEE	175,000	-	-	-	-	-	7,500	7,500	167,500	95.7%
FIXED FEE*	3,391,429	178,321	-	35,664	35,664	-	-	178,321	3,213,108	94.7%
TOTAL	69,547,808	1,995,462	438,443	399,092	399,092	-	3,894,361	5,889,824	63,657,984	91.5%

Obligated Funds	20,000,000	
Expenditures-to-Date	1,995,462	10.0%
Remaining Obl. Funds	18,004,538	90.0%

NOTES:

*5 Mo Average is in place of 6 Mo. Average as the project only has 5 months of expenditures

**Creative Associates does not account on an accruals basis, therefore this section of the report will always be \$0

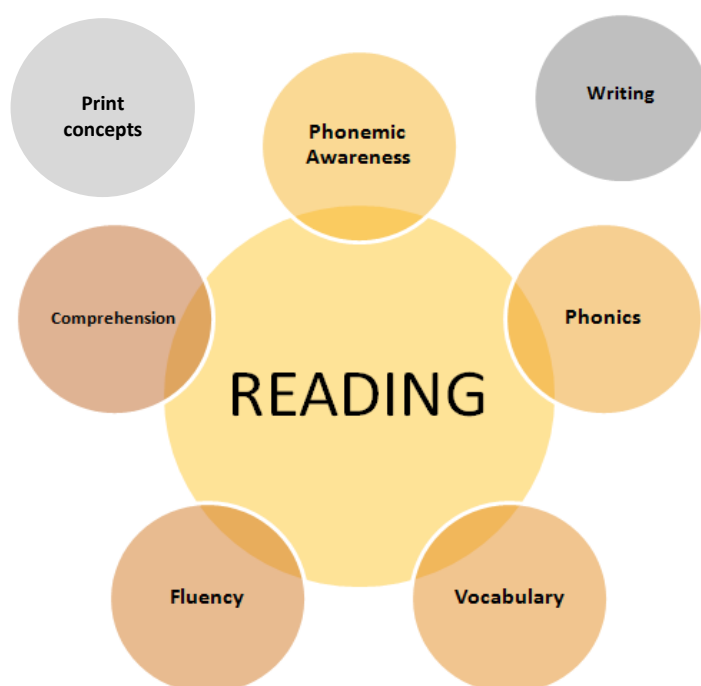
Annex-11 5+2 Explanation

What are the component skills of reading (including print concepts and writing)?

Before children can start learning to read, they need to become aware of and understand the concept of written letters, words and text. The *print concept* is used as a related component skill of reading. Children must learn that messages can be conveyed in writing; that some written symbols are letters of an alphabet; where to begin reading on a page or in a book; what a book is and what the cover, title, and author are; which direction a text is read; and that illustrations are used to convey meaning within a text.

As learners gain an awareness and understanding of *print concepts*, they can begin to develop other component skills of reading. There are five components skills, as well as the skill of writing, that combine to enable children to both decode words and understand what they read. Everyone uses these component skills when they read even though fluent and successful readers may not realize when each skill is used.

The **five components** of teaching reading (plus 2) are:



WHY INCLUDE WRITING?

Reading and writing are related skills which are best learned together. An effective reading program includes writing activities so that students can improve their reading through writing and improve their writing through reading. Writing is considered to be an additional component of learning to reading.

For students to learn to read and write in the early grades of primary school, they must work regularly with the five components skills and writing. As students become more proficient readers, the emphasis placed on each of these skills will likely change, but these component skills are always the skills that good readers will have to master and use in new reading situations.

Annex-12

Annex – 12 Trip Reports

Please find trip reports attached as a separate document.